

What Gastric Bypass Involves

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Gastric bypass surgery is performed under general anesthesia and can last upwards of four hours. Most patients who have gastric bypass surgery can expect a few days in the hospital to recover before being released.

In gastric bypass the surgeon forms a small pouch at the upper portion of your stomach and adds a bypass around a segment of your stomach and small intestine.

The surgeon staples your stomach across the top, sealing it off from the remainder of your stomach. The resulting pouch is generally the size of a walnut and can hold only about an ounce of food. While the pouch is physically separated from the rest of the stomach, the surgeon cuts the small intestine and sews a portion of it directly onto the pouch.

This connection reroutes the food, bypassing the majority of your stomach and the first section of your small intestine. Food enters straight into the second section of your small intestine, therefore limiting your ability to absorb calories. Even though food never reaches the lower portion of your stomach, the stomach remains healthy and will continue to secrete digestive juices to mix with food in your small intestine.

With gastric bypass surgery, a tube is inserted through your nose into the upper stomach pouch. In some instances, this tube remains in place overnight. The tube is joined to a suction machine after surgery to make sure the small stomach pouch is empty so that the staple line can heal.

You may have another tube in the bypassed stomach. This tube exits the side of your abdomen and is taken out four to six weeks after surgery. Some skin irritation may be an issue around this tube.